

United States Mint Refines 50 State Quarters Design Evaluation Process

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Changes Focus on Enhanced Communications with States and New Artistic Infusion Program

WASHINGTON — United States Mint Director Henrietta Holsman Fore today announced much — anticipated revisions to the 50 State Quarters Program design evaluation process. The revisions will enhance the program's educational value and promote the historical accuracy and artistic beauty of the designs. The recommended changes were approved by U.S. Treasury Secretary Snow on March 8, 2003, and will be implemented in the 2005 quarter design evaluation process.

"The responses to our recent outreach effort confirmed that the 50 State Quarters Program is strong, educational, and effective," said Director Fore. "The responses also suggest that modest changes to this process can help strengthen the program by improving communications between the United States Mint and the states, as well as between the states and their citizens. In addition, we will add a new component, an Artistic Infusion Program."

In late 2002, the United States Mint contacted the numismatic and artistic communities, state officials, historians, educators and the general public to solicit feedback on the current design process. This outreach effort sought to ensure that the design evaluation process remains true to the intent of the legislation, ensuring fairness, clarity, and wide acceptance.

Under the new process, the design evaluation period for the state quarters would begin 24 months before the year of issue, instead of the 18-month schedule currently used. The revised process also requires states to submit three to five design concepts in a narrative format, instead of illustrations or formal artistic renderings. This revision marks a return to the program's original design evaluation process. Asking states to submit written concepts promotes the United States Mint's artists' and the artists' comprehensive understanding of the emblematic significance and historical details of the states' chosen concepts.

"In the near future, we will invite artists from across the nation to participate in a new Artistic Infusion Program, which will be a critical component of the 50 State Quarters Program design process," said Director Fore. "We believe this effort will help further a renaissance in coin design by tapping in to the talent and creative energy of artists across the nation infusing new energy in to this historic program."

Under the Artistic Infusion Program, artists from around the country will be invited to apply to participate under contract with the United States Mint to render the narrative descriptions provided by the states into coinable, appropriate, educational, historically accurate and aesthetically-pleasing quarter designs. The United States Mint will announce additional information about the Artistic Infusion Program later this spring.

A stage was added to the design evaluation process to improve communications with each governor's office from the earliest stages of the design evaluation process, before designs are made public through the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts and the Citizen's Commemorative Coin Advisory Committee. The United States Mint will use the Artistic Infusion Program to develop artwork, and the governors will have the opportunity to see the candidate designs under consideration. This process also allows each state to appoint an historian or other appropriate representatives to ensure that the designs appropriately reflect the heritage of the states and are suitable to the educational mandate of the authorizing legislation.

Launched in 1999, the United States Mint's 50 State Quarters Program is a 10-year initiative that honors each of the states in the order that they were admitted into the Union. Each quarter is produced for about 10 weeks and will never be produced again. Surveys show that more than 130 million adults are collecting the quarters, of which five are released in any given year.

Created by Congress in 1792, the United States Mint is the manufacturer of legal tender coinage for the United States. In Fiscal Year 2002, the United States Mint manufactured approximately 15 billion coins and generated revenue of \$1.8 billion. With facilities in five states and the District of Columbia, the United States Mint has customers in 54 countries and is the world's 30th largest e-retailer.

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